



THE IMPLEMENTATION OF FLASHCARD IN IMPROVING CHILDREN'S INTEREST IN LEARNING ENGLISH AT KAMPUNG TANAMA

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Abstract

This study explores the implementation of flashcards as a medium to enhance children's interest in learning English in a community-based setting at Kampung Tanama, Fakfak, West Papua. Unlike formal school environments, the learning activities were conducted at the researcher's home by inviting children from the neighborhood to participate in informal English lessons. The study employed a qualitative descriptive method, with observations and interviews as the main data collection techniques. The findings revealed that the use of colorful and interactive flashcards significantly increased children's enthusiasm and participation. They became more active in repeating vocabulary, recognizing pictures, and engaging in simple English conversations. This research indicates that flashcards can be an effective tool in non-formal education to foster children's motivation and interest in learning English.

Keywords: Flashcards, Interest in Learning, English for Children, Non-formal Education

1. INTRODUCTION

In the 21st century, English has become an essential global language that plays a crucial role in communication, education, technology, and career opportunities. The earlier children are exposed to English, the better their chances of acquiring the language naturally and effectively. Early exposure helps children develop not only linguistic competence but also confidence and curiosity in using the language (Cameron, 2021). However, the reality in many rural areas, including Kampung Tanama, shows that children have limited opportunities to learn and practice English due to a lack of formal instruction, insufficient learning resources, and minimal exposure outside the school environment.

In Indonesia, English is taught as a foreign language, and its inclusion in the curriculum often varies depending on the level of education and regional policies. While some elementary schools may provide English lessons, others do not, leaving children with unequal access to early English learning opportunities. Even in schools where English is taught, the limited number of teaching hours and the focus on grammar rather than communication often reduce students' motivation to learn (Musthafa, 2019). This situation highlights the importance of alternative and supplementary learning strategies, particularly in non-formal and community-based settings.

Community-based learning activities, such as informal English clubs or home-based classes, can play a significant role in bridging this gap. By creating a fun and engaging learning environment outside the classroom, children can be motivated to learn without the pressure of examinations or strict curricula. Such informal learning also strengthens community bonds and supports children's holistic development (Brewster & Ellis, 2020). In this context, teachers, parents, and community members can serve as facilitators who introduce English through creative and enjoyable methods.

One effective strategy for teaching young learners is the use of visual aids, particularly flashcards. It is simple, portable, and versatile tools that combine images and words, making them suitable for children who are still developing their literacy skills. Studies have shown that flashcards



can improve vocabulary acquisition, enhance memory retention, and increase motivation among young learners (Alqahtani, 2023; Nguyen, 2022). The visual appeal of flashcards also helps children associate words with real objects, making learning more concrete and meaningful. Flashcards, as a simple, low-cost, and highly effective medium, have been widely recognized in literature as beneficial for young learners. They provide visual stimuli, encourage interaction, and help children memorize vocabulary in a fun and engaging way (Susanti, 2022; Nguyen, 2022). Several studies (Alqahtani, 2023; Darmawan, 2023) also suggest that flashcards increase motivation and participation among learners.

In the case of Kampung Tanama, the researcher initiated an informal learning program at home by inviting children from the neighborhood to participate in English learning sessions. The goal was not only to introduce basic English vocabulary but also to stimulate children's interest in learning through interactive and enjoyable activities. Unlike in formal schools where children may feel pressured, the informal setting provided a relaxed and supportive atmosphere, encouraging children to learn at their own pace.

Therefore, this study seeks to investigate the implementation of flashcards in improving children's interest in learning English in Kampung Tanama through a non-formal approach. The uniqueness of this research lies in its community-based context, as the lessons were conducted not in schools but at the researcher's home, inviting children from the surrounding neighborhood.

2. METHOD OF RESEARCH

2.1. Research Design

This study used a **qualitative descriptive design** to explore the effectiveness of flashcards in fostering children's interest in learning English. This method allowed the researcher to document behaviors, attitudes, and responses during the learning activities.

2.2. Participants

The participants were **ten children aged 7–10 years old**, living in Kampung Tanama. They voluntarily attended informal English learning sessions conducted at the researcher's home. The group consisted of both boys and girls with varying levels of exposure to English, though most had very limited prior knowledge.

2.3. Procedure

The study was conducted over **four weeks**, with sessions held **twice a week**, each lasting about 60 minutes.

- **Week 1:** Introduction to English through flashcards of colors and numbers.
- **Week 2:** Vocabulary related to fruits and animals.
- **Week 3:** Vocabulary related to household objects and clothing.
- **Week 4:** Simple daily expressions with flashcard support.

Each session followed three main steps:

1. **Presentation:** Showing flashcards and introducing the English word.
2. **Practice:** Repetition, pronunciation drills, and matching games.
3. **Production:** Children using the words in short phrases or role-play activities.

2.4. Data Collection

Two main techniques were used:

- **Observation:** The researcher recorded children's attention span, participation, enthusiasm, and verbal responses.



- **Informal Interviews:** At the end of sessions, children were asked about their feelings and preferences regarding the use of flashcards.

2.5. Data Analysis

The data were analyzed using **thematic analysis**. Indicators of children's interest included:

- Enthusiasm (smiling, volunteering, asking questions).
- Active participation (joining games, repeating words).
- Positive feedback during interviews (enjoyment, willingness to continue learning).

3. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

3.1. Results

3.1.1. Increased Attention and Focus

Observations showed that children were more attentive when flashcards were used compared to verbal explanations alone. The use of bright colors and attractive images successfully captured their interest. Even children who were initially distracted became more focused once flashcards were introduced. This aligns with Nguyen (2022), who argued that visual aids increase learners' attention span and comprehension.

3.1.2. Active Participation

Flashcards encouraged children to participate actively. For example, during matching games, children competed eagerly to associate pictures with English words. Even the shyest participants showed progress in speaking out vocabulary by the third session. This finding is consistent with Alqahtani (2023), who noted that flashcards promote student engagement and reduce reluctance to participate.

3.1.3. Enjoyable Learning Atmosphere

The informal setting at the researcher's home created a relaxed learning environment. Children were not pressured by grades or assessments, which made them more comfortable experimenting with English. The games and activities with flashcards generated excitement and laughter, which are crucial factors in sustaining interest. This reflects Darmawan's (2023) finding that flashcards not only improve language acquisition but also foster a positive emotional climate.

3.1.4. Improved Vocabulary Recognition

By the end of the four-week program, children were able to recall and pronounce at least 20–25 English words related to everyday objects. This was confirmed during informal interviews where children could correctly identify items on flashcards without prompts. The result supports Susanti (2022), who emphasized that flashcards enhance retention and recall among young learners.

3.1.5. Contribution to Non-formal Education

An important implication of this study is its contribution to non-formal education practices. While flashcards are commonly applied in schools, this research demonstrates their effectiveness in community-based learning environments. This suggests that parents, local volunteers, and community educators can adopt similar strategies to supplement children's English learning at home or in neighborhood study groups.

3.2. Discussion

The findings of this study indicate that the implementation of flashcards in a non-formal, community-based learning environment significantly contributed to improving children's interest in learning English. The discussion of these findings is organized around key aspects of interest in learning, including attention, participation, emotional engagement, and vocabulary development.



First, the increased attention and focus observed during the learning sessions highlight the effectiveness of flashcards as visual learning media for young learners. Children in Kampung Tanama showed greater concentration when colorful images were presented compared to verbal explanations alone. This supports cognitive learning theory, which emphasizes that young learners process visual information more effectively than abstract language (Cameron, 2021). Flashcards help bridge the gap between concrete objects and abstract vocabulary, making English learning more accessible and meaningful for children with limited exposure to the language.

Second, the active participation demonstrated by the children suggests that flashcards function not only as instructional tools but also as interactive learning triggers. The use of games, repetition, and matching activities encouraged children to speak, respond, and collaborate with peers. This finding aligns with Alqahtani (2023) and Nguyen (2022), who argue that flashcards reduce learners' anxiety and promote active engagement, especially among shy or beginner learners. In the informal setting of this study, children appeared more confident in experimenting with English without fear of making mistakes, which is a crucial factor in early language acquisition.

Moreover, the enjoyable learning atmosphere created through flashcard-based activities played a vital role in sustaining children's motivation. Unlike formal classroom environments that may emphasize assessment and correctness, the home-based learning sessions allowed children to associate English learning with fun and positive emotions. According to Brewster and Ellis (2020), emotional engagement is a key determinant of long-term interest in language learning. The laughter, excitement, and enthusiasm observed during the sessions indicate that flashcards contributed to a positive affective learning environment, which is essential for young learners.

In terms of vocabulary recognition, the ability of children to recall and pronounce 20–25 English words by the end of the program demonstrates that flashcards support memory retention and recall. This finding corroborates Susanti (2022), who reported that repeated exposure to visual-word associations enhances vocabulary mastery among EFL learners. Although this study did not employ formal testing, consistent observations and informal interviews provided sufficient evidence that children developed meaningful vocabulary knowledge rather than rote memorization.

Importantly, this study extends previous research by situating flashcard use within a non-formal, community-based context. While many studies focus on classroom-based implementation, the present findings suggest that flashcards are equally effective in informal settings such as home-based learning groups. This has practical implications for rural or under-resourced areas where access to formal English education is limited. Parents, community volunteers, and educators can adopt flashcards as a low-cost and flexible tool to support children's early English learning outside school.

However, this study also has limitations. The small number of participants and the short duration of the program limit the generalizability of the findings. Future research could involve larger groups, longer intervention periods, or comparative studies between formal and non-formal learning environments to strengthen the evidence base.

Overall, the discussion confirms that flashcards are not merely teaching aids but powerful pedagogical tools that foster interest, engagement, and early language development among young learners, particularly in community-based learning contexts such as Kampung Tanama.

4. CONCLUSION

This study concludes that flashcards are highly effective in improving children's interest in learning English in non-formal contexts such as Kampung Tanama. The use of flashcards not only enhanced children's attention and participation but also created a fun and enjoyable atmosphere that motivated them to learn.



Key outcomes include:

- Increased focus and attention span.
- Greater participation and willingness to speak English.
- Enjoyable and motivating learning experiences.
- Significant improvement in vocabulary recognition.

The findings highlight the potential of flashcards as a low-cost, practical, and adaptable teaching aid suitable for both formal and informal learning settings. Future research may explore combining flashcards with digital tools, expanding the study to larger groups, or comparing effectiveness between school-based and community-based learning environments.

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